



As part of our commitment to becoming an employer of choice and improving morale, productivity, and quality of worklife, the Lab will work toward offering employees new options for the care of their children.

Child Development Center at Los Alamos National Laboratory

Numerous studies have shown that a major issue for employees is access to quality childcare. This is also an important concern at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Facilities throughout the Department of Energy complex have responded to this issue by establishing childcare centers on or near DOE property. Today we are announcing Los Alamos National Laboratory's intention to establish a child development center for its employees. The initial effort will focus on infant and pre-kindergarten care.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Lab establishing a Child Development Center?

Childcare is a key issue for improved quality of worklife and employee productivity. Employees have repeatedly told Director John Browne that improved access to childcare is a key issue for the Laboratory. For example, a report prepared by Burud & Associates for the Lab conservatively estimated that in 1995, the Lab lost \$1.5 million because of childcare-related absences of employees.

Why should the Lab expend resources, time, effort, and money to implement on- or near-site childcare?

This is good business. In 1995, the Lab lost \$1.5 million dollars and more than 10,000 workdays because of childcare-related issues. The Lab would benefit greatly by minimizing future losses. Furthermore, many nonparent employees **favor** on- or near-site daycare. Potential benefits include increased productivity, attraction and retention of world-class staff, and a greatly improved work environment.

Why should I be in favor of Lab childcare?

Leading organizations in the private and public sector have long recognized the wisdom of offering childcare. The consequent improvements in employee morale and productivity are also widely recognized.

What is planned for the Lab's Child Development Center?

Preliminary assessments indicate a need for a facility to accommodate 60 to 80 children. Twenty slots would be reserved for infants, twenty for toddlers, and twenty to forty for 2-5 year olds and kindergartners. As this is a community-based effort, we anticipate community involvement in the form of partial staffing by student interns and partnerships with local educational institutions to offer academic credit in early childhood education.

(Over)

Will there be provisions for caring for mildly ill children?

We recognize that care of mildly ill children is a significant productivity issue. However, because of the special requirements necessary for such care, we are not sure whether we'll be able to address this need in the proposed facility.

What is being done about elder-care issues, which in a rapidly aging population are becoming increasingly important?

This, too, is a very important issue that has not been overlooked. The Burud and Associates Study did not address elder care, but many respondents included comments suggesting a present and future need for elder care. The Lab will address elder care in the future, as part of its quality of worklife initiatives.

How will Lab childcare impact the local providers?

The Lab recognizes that the implementation of an onsite or near-site daycare center presents real concerns for local providers. The Lab will work with these providers, keeping them abreast of plans and incorporating their ideas and expertise into the facility and program design.

Who will operate the Lab's Child Development Center?

According to DOE regulations, the Lab must contract out the daycare provider services and cannot run the center. It is hoped, however, that the Laboratory's involvement in childcare will contribute yet another option for quality care in our community.

Will my child be safe at this center?

Yes, your child will be as safe as he/she would be at any other local childcare facility. The Lab will meet or exceed local, state, and federal regulations for childcare facilities. In addition, all staff will be licensed and subject to background checks. The center will seek accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as soon as possible.

How much will childcare cost?

We intend for the Child Development Center to be open and affordable for all employees. Fee schedules will be developed to ensure this.

How will this benefit the community?

The Laboratory will explore partnerships with local educational institutions (University of New Mexico—Los Alamos, and the Northern New Mexico and Santa Fe Community Colleges) to create training courses in child development, perhaps certifying the participants (similar to the former "nanny program" at UNM-LA). Such training will improve the quality of childcare not only at the Lab but also for the community at large. A portion of the workforce at the LANL Child Development Center will include student interns.

Will Laboratory contract and subcontract personnel be eligible to use the center?

Yes!

When will the center open?

We anticipate that the center will open in 12 to 18 months.



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